

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for carefully considering this application.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-6 are pending in this application. Claim 1 is independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 1.

Claim Amendments

Claim 1 has been amended to clarify the present invention. Claim 2 has been amended to follow antecedent basis. Claims 3-6 have been amended according to the changes to claim 1. No new matter has been added by way of these amendments.

Claim Objections

Claim 1 was objected to for containing informalities. Claims 2-6 were objected to for their dependence on claim 1. Claim 1 has been amended to correct the informalities. Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C § 102

Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by PCT Application Publication No. 93/15846 (“Schroeter”). Claim 1 has been amended in this application to clarify the present invention. To the extent that this rejection may still apply to amended claim 1, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

Amended claim 1 recites a resist stripping equipment that includes a first stripping solution tank in which resist stripping solution is preserved, a first resist stripping

chamber in which a substrate covered with resist is accommodated, a first solution line which supplies the sprayed resist stripping solution from the first resist stripping chamber to the first resist stripping tank, a second resist stripping chamber which is connected to the first resist stripping chamber and whereto the substrate is supplied from the first resist stripping chamber, a second stripping solution tank in which resist stripping solution is preserved, a second solution line which supplies the sprayed resist stripping solution from the second resist stripping chamber to the second resist stripping tank, and a line which is connected to the second stripping solution tank and supplies the resist stripping solution to the first stripping solution tank.

With reference to Figure 1 of Schroeter, Schroeter shows a process and device for low-emission spraying of liquid paint in a spray booth 10. The overspray of the paint is captured and removed from the spray booth 10, separated from the air by means of one or more liquid/gas separating plants 15, 16, and combined with fresh paint for direct re-use without any preparation. Schroeter neither shows nor suggests the use of more than one chamber for spraying, as recited in amended claim 1. Figure 1 from Schroeter shows the use of a *single* booth 10 for spraying. Accordingly, Schroeter cannot be said to anticipate amended claim 1.

Schroeter neither shows nor suggests each chamber to be connected to a corresponding individual tank to preserve the spray solution, as recited in amended claim 1. Because Schroeter shows the use of a single booth, Schroeter cannot show multiple chambers connected to multiple tanks to preserve the spray solution. Further, amended claim 1 recites the tanks preserving the spray solution have a line connecting one tank to another, which Schroeter fails to show. The spray solution in the first tank is used for the first stripping of the substrate, so the spray solution in the first tank is more easily deteriorated compared with the spray solution in the second tank (beginning page 29, line 14). By being able to supply the spray

solution from the second tank to the first tank, more efficient use of the spray solution becomes possible.

In view of above, Schroeter fails to show or suggest the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 1. Thus, amended claim 1 is patentable over Schroeter. Dependent claim 2 is allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C § 103

U.S. Patent No. 5,762,749

Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schroeter in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,762,749 (“Suzuki”). Claim 1 has been amended in this application to clarify the present invention. To the extent that this rejection may still apply, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed above with respect to amended claim 1, from which claim 3 depends, Schroeter neither shows nor suggests the use of multiple chambers and tanks to spray the solution, with a connection between the tanks, as recited in amended claim 1. Suzuki, which the Examiner only asserts as teaching a gas spout in a processing chamber facing the substrate, does not provide that which Schroeter lacks, with respect to amended independent claim 1.

In view of above, Schroeter and Suzuki, whether considered separately or in combination, fail to show or suggest the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 1. Thus, amended claim 1 is patentable over Schroeter and Suzuki. Claim 3, which depends from claim 1, is allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully traversed.

U.S. Patent No. 5,715,612

Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schroeter in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,715,612 (“Schwekler”). Claim 1 has been amended in this application to clarify the present invention. To the extent that this rejection may still apply, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed above with respect to amended claim 1, from which claim 4 depends, Schroeter neither shows nor suggests the use of multiple chambers and tanks to spray the solution, with a connection between the tanks, as recited in amended claim 1. Schwenkler, which the Examiner asserts as teaching the use of an inert gas supply unit within the processing chambers, does not provide that which Schroeter lacks, with respect to amended independent claim 1.

In view of above, Schroeter and Schwenkler, whether considered separately or in combination, fail to show or suggest the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 1. Thus, amended claim 1 is patentable over Schroeter and Schwenkler. Claim 4, which depends from claim 1, is allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully traversed.

U.S. Patent No. 4,904,339

Claims 5-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schroeter in view of Schwenkler and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 4,904,339 (“Diehl”). Claim 1 has been amended in this application to clarify the present invention. To the extent that this rejection may still apply, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed above, Schroeter and Schwenkler, whether considered separately or in combination, neither show nor suggest the use of multiple chambers and tanks to spray the solution, with a connection between the tanks, as recited in amended claim 1. Diehl, which the Examiner asserts as teaching the use of a plurality of processing chambers, does not provide that which Schroeter and Schwenkler lack, with respect to amended independent claim 1.

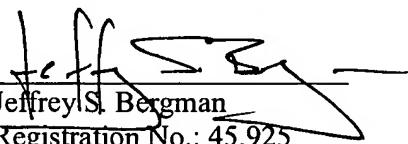
In view of above, Schroeter, Schwenkler, and Diehl, whether considered separately or in combination, fail to show or suggest the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 1. Thus, amended claim 1 is patentable over Schroeter, Schwenkler, and Diehl. Claims 5-6, which depend from claim 1, are allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 07200/032001).

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Respectfully submitted,

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